

# THE CONTINUING EDUCATION COORDINATOR'S ***BULLETIN***

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INFORMATION AND IDEAS FROM THE INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE CLINICAL SUPPORT CENTER

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## ABOUT THIS "BULLETIN"....

The Clinical Support Center is starting this *Bulletin* to try to give some help to all of you who have volunteered to take on the task of coordinating continuing education activities in addition to your regular duties. Each month we will send you information about new developments in continuing education, suggestions about how to "do" different aspects of continuing education, and ideas about improving your CE activities or making your job easier.

We will include forms and other tools that you may find useful, and articles from the CE literature.

We encourage you to call or write to us with suggestions about topics we should discuss, or with your own ideas and solutions that you feel might benefit others.

If you are not on the mailing list for this *Bulletin* and you wish to be added to it, please give Carrie Dallas a call at 602-263-1581, or write to us at:

The IHS Clinical Support Center  
4212 North 16th Street  
Phoenix, Arizona 85016

Contacts: Steve Foster, RPh, PharmD, Pharmacist Educator; Wilma Morgan, MS, FNP, Nurse Educator, John Saari, MD, Physician Educator

## COMMERCIAL SUPPORT OF CE

Most of you have probably heard of the controversy in the professional and public media about the relationships between pharmaceutical companies and those who put on continuing education. Both the American Medical Association and the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (by whom the Clinical Support Center is accredited for physician CE) have adopted regulations for ethical and practical actions in this area which we endorse and have adopted for all of the educational activities we sponsor.

Although relatively few CE activities in the IHS involve pharmaceutical support, we need to be certain that all such activities adhere to these new regulations. We also believe this will enhance the relationship between CE providers and commercial supporters.

Enclosed with this *Bulletin* is an excerpt from an article in the September 2, 1992 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, (Vol. 268, No. 9, pp 1118-1120) which gives a very concise overview of the development of the "Standards for Commercial Support of Continuing Medical Education." Although this discusses physician CE, we feel that it applies equally to CE for all professions.

Also enclosed are the actual "Standards" referred to above. The most important points to be taken from them are 1) the provider must retain full responsibility for the choosing the topic and speaker for all presentations, and 2) the provider must assure that all activities are free of commercial bias.

In order to meet these two requirements, the "Standards" state that there will be a written, signed agreement between the commercial supporter and the CE coordinator spelling out the nature of all support (travel, honoraria, etc.). In addition, any support or any other significant financial interest or relationship between the speaker and the supporting company must be made known to the audience ahead of time.

To help those of you who work with pharmaceutical companies, enclosed are model agreements between pharmaceutical supporters and CE coordinators for your use, as well as disclosure forms for faculty who may receive financial support or have other financial interests.

Does this apply to you? It does if you have speakers in your activities who are supported (travel, honoraria, etc.) by commercial sources. You have to be wary, unfortunately, since some speakers you invite may even go out and find their own commercial support.

What do you have to do? You should ask your presenters if they have any commercial support or any other potential conflict of interest for their talk. If they do, they should complete the disclosure form. You should have any pharmaceutical company offering support complete and sign the agreement you use. Then, you should let your audience know (verbally or in the printed brochure or

program if this applies) of any commercial support or financial interest.

How does this help you? Although it seems awkward and burdensome at first, these steps will help eliminate speakers and pharmaceutical companies who view continuing education as an opportunity to promote products. It will let them know that we take the new "Standards" seriously. And, in the long run, it will persuade all pharmaceutical companies that if they wish to support CE, it must be for the right reasons.

We are all feeling our way with these issues and learning how to achieve what are reasonable goals. These issues will not go away. Give this some thought. It may be that pharmaceutical support isn't worth the hassle. Or, if you are able to implement this, you may find that the commercial support obtain is more helpful.

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## THE BOTTOM LINE....

The most important thing to remember is to call us at the Clinical Support Center as soon as you *think* about planning a continuing education activity. Our number is:

602-263-1581

FAX 602-263-1582.

Our address is:

CLINICAL SUPPORT CENTER  
4212 N. 16TH ST.  
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